

A new genus of flea beetles from the Greater Antilles (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae)

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Abstract

The new genus *Normaltica* and two new species (*N. obrieni* from Puerto Rico and *N. iviei* from the Dominican Republic) are described and illustrated. A key and illustrations of these taxa are provided. Morphological consequences of wing reduction are discussed. Variability of *N. obrieni* is illustrated and discussed.

Key words: Chrysomelidae, new genus, new species, Greater Antilles

Introduction

Compared to the other regional faunas of the New World, the flea beetles of the West Indies including the Greater Antilles, are relatively well studied. Extensive collecting and publications of the first half of the 20th century reported many unusual and endemic flea beetle taxa (Blake 1928, 1931, 1934, 1937, 1938, 1944, 1947, 1960, 1964). However, recent collecting efforts in Puerto Rico and earlier in the Dominican Republic revealed unique flea beetles with several features previously unknown among flea beetle genera of the New World. The most conspicuous of these features is clavate antennae. So far, the only other known flea beetles with clavate antennae (*Clavicornaltica* Scherer) are from southern Asia, but the tendency towards clavate antennae is apparent in some other flea beetle genera, particularly in those living in leaf litter or moss in the montane areas of Asia. For example, the apical antennomeres of *Benedictus* Scherer and *Paraminota* Scherer are notably shorter and wider than in most flea beetles. This is particularly evident in antennomere 8, which is shorter in the two aforementioned genera as well as in *Paraminotella* Döberl and Konstantinov. Although a biological meaning for this tendency is not clear, it seems reasonable that more robust antennae are less prone to damage when beetles move in such a dense substrate as leaf litter and moss. Since these beetles clearly belong to